REMARKS

The rejection of claims 1-3 [under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)] in view of Osugi et al. (U.S. 4,666,945) is believed to be obviated by amendment. Osugi neither discloses nor suggests what the Applicants discovered. Therefore, it is requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejection in view of the amendment and the following comments.

The Examiner has indicated in the Official Action that "Osugi et al discloses a method for producing a CuZnAlZr oxide catalyst" and "Osugi et al clearly discloses the catalyst made by the process of claims 1 and 2".

The present invention relates to a method of producing a CuZnAlZr oxide catalyst, wherein a catalyst precursor consisting of a CuZnAlZr layered double hydroxide by drying the precipitate generated in the processes of the method as defined in Claim 1.

The composition of the precipitate differs largely due to the conditions of the processes and the activity of the catalyst differs largely due to the composition.

The composition of the precipitate is determined mainly by the conditions of pH in the process of producing a precipitate and pH in the process of washing which are important in this invention.

Therefore, inclusion of the passages "while agitating with the mixture at room temperature and pH of approximately 9" and "the precipitate with deionized water until pH of the filtrate becomes 7" in Claim 1, provides a claimed method that produces a precipitate having a specific composition and the catalyst having a specific activity. The pH of the solution and the washes plays a critical role in determining the activity of the resultant catalyst.

Applicants assert that if the conditions of pH are different, the composition of the precipitate is different and the activity of the catalyst obtained is different.

Osugi does not disclose what the Applicants have discovered. Therefore, the presently claimed method is neither anticipated by nor made obvious in view of Osugi.

The pH conditions in the processes of generating the precipitate and washing the precipitate are very important in this invention. The catalyst having a high activity for oxidative stem reforming reaction is produced by adopting the specific pH conditions in this invention.

In view of the present amendment, the Applicants respectfully submit that the claims define a patentable invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections is requested, as is the passage of this case to Issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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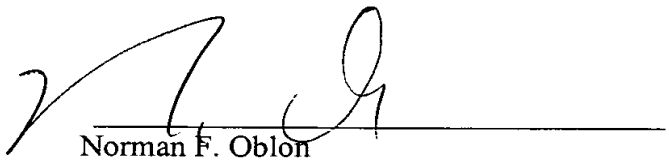

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